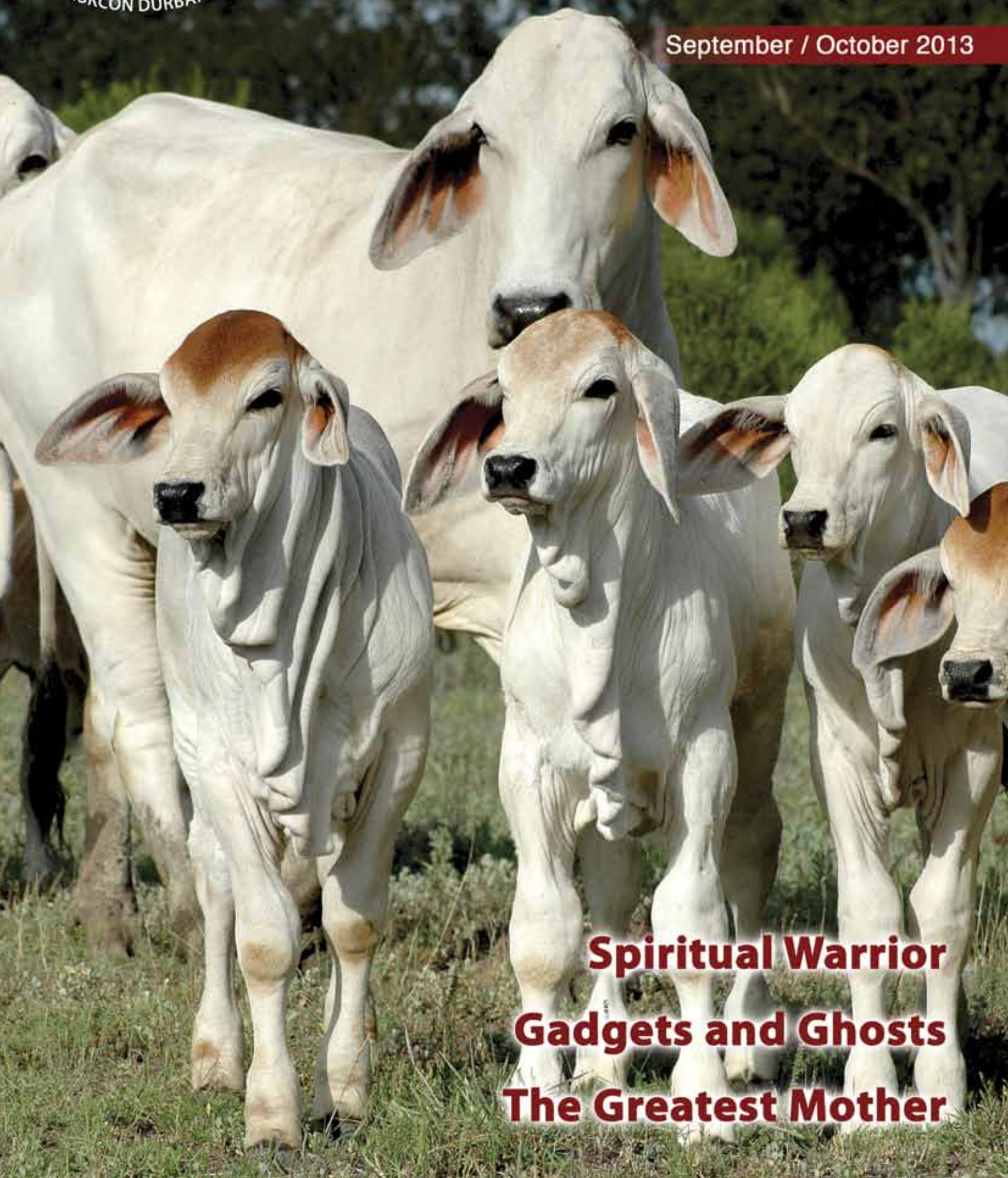




International Society for Krishna Consciousness  
Founder Acharya: His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

# HARE KRISHNA NEWS

September / October 2013

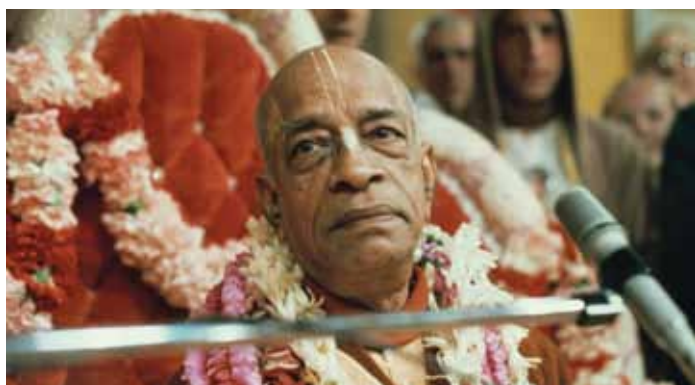


**Spiritual Warrior**  
**Gadgets and Ghosts**  
**The Greatest Mother**



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Founder Acharya His Divine Grace  
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

## In this issue...

### Editor's Note

Just when the buzz seems to subside, along comes another wave of ecstatic festivals. The auspicious month of Kartik is almost upon us. It encompasses thirty days dedicated worship of Lord Damodar, the form of Lord Krishna as a baby, Who stole our hearts with His sweet pastimes. It is the time of the year when spiritual practices that are generally difficult to perform, somehow become a little easier. Take one step forward and the mercy and blessings that come from worshipping Lord Damodar, seems to strengthen the pace. I find the offering of lamps an intimate exchange. It gives me the anticipated opportunity to steal a quiet moment to be alone with my Lord.

The daily singing of the *Damodarastakam* prayers enhances the desire to worship the Lord as well as enhances the longing to surrender to His will. *Kartik Mahatmya* states, "Of the twelve months, this month is particularly dear to Sri Krishna. Sri Vishnu certainly rewards the devotee who worships Him during Kartik with residence in His own abode...In this world, the results of vows last for one lifetime only, but the effects of Kartik *vratas* extend up to one hundred lives." If you are unable to offer a lamp at the temple, it is just as auspicious to perform the worship in your home.

The Vaishnava calendar highlights the special festivals celebrated in this beautiful month of Kartik.

In keeping with our vision of providing you with thought-provoking articles, this issue has some exciting and touching stories. A young lady shares her journey of surviving life-threatening surgery whilst our roving reporter attends a Krishna Janmashtami celebration in the confines of a prison. The Vaishnava Research forum holds an inspiring and successful seminar on anger management and our parenting column tackles the benefits of a healthy vegetarian diet for children. To all our cooking enthusiasts, the recipe column has some special Diwali treats.

Happy Kartik!

Haripriya Devi Dasi

### Letters to the Editor

If you would like to share your temple experience, spiritual or service related realisations then write to Haripriya Devi Dasi: [haripriya@nitai.co.za](mailto:haripriya@nitai.co.za) or Rasasthali Dasi: [rasasthali@nitai.co.za](mailto:rasasthali@nitai.co.za)

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## Spiritual Warrior Spiritual Teacher

Sripada Bhakti Tirtha Swami was a leading preacher and initiating guru in the international Krishna consciousness movement. Known as a spiritual warrior (the title of one of his book series), he was recognized especially for his compassion, inspirational preaching, and innovative leadership, and distributing spiritual literature throughout the world, including in America, Africa, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union.

“Despite being born in a situation full of disadvantages and obstacles and difficulties,” writes Giriraj Swami in his book *Many Moons*, “Bhakti Tirtha Swami still became a success, even before he came to Krishna consciousness. For instance, he was elected president of his class at Princeton University, which was really extraordinary. It would be a great achievement for anyone, at any time, but for a black person to be elected president of his class at that time at such a prestigious university was a tremendous achievement. Maharaja became a fierce fighter for the principle that . . . everyone should have an equal



Nelson Mandela with Bhakti Tirtha Swami

opportunity to achieve success in life. And he applied the same principle in Krishna consciousness—that everyone, regardless of their background or condition, should have the opportunity to become Krishna conscious.” (p. 42)

As recounted in *Many Moons*, “A Christian minister, who knew that Bhakti Tirtha Swami had been a child evangelist, asked him, ‘Why, with your background, are you a Hare Krishna?’ He responded, ‘I am no more a Hare Krishna than you are. I have no desire to become Christian, Muslim, Hare Krishna, or any other temporary designation. I desire to love God, and if I could learn how to love God in the Boy Scouts, I would become a Boy Scout.’ He said, ‘It just so happens that this process helps me to learn to love God more than any other process I’ve encountered.’” (p. 170)

Bhakti Tirtha Swami departed from this world in 2005, leaving behind a legacy of books and teachings. His life is celebrated and his departure mourned by devotees worldwide, who remember him as a wise and saintly Vaishnava.

For more on Bhakti Tirtha Swami go to [www.btswami.com](http://www.btswami.com).

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I read *Srimad Bhagavatam* every day using a magnified glass due to my poor eyesight. I am particularly inspired by Vidura’s example, whom I read about recently in *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and would like to share with you and the readers:

Vidura was the youngest brother of Dhritarashtra and Pandu, but was the son of a maid. As such Vidura did not have any claim to the throne but by the virtue of his spiritual education he became an adviser to Dhritarashtra. In a purport, Srila Prabhupada points out that Vidura who was born of a *sudra* mother was a *sudra*, but this was no obstacle to being an advisor to the king. His devotion for God raised him to the level of Vaishnava, greater than that of a Brahman, which is the highest order in the caste system. This puts an end to the false theory that the caste system is a rigid system placing people in a social order unable to elevate oneself. The *varnashrama* system was not rigid and people could, through their spiritual education move upwards or through lack of spiritual education, move downwards.

After Pandu’s death, his wife Kunthi, and her sons

returned to Hasthinapur under the protection of Dhritarashtra. It was understood that Yudhishtir would become king but Dhritarashtra’s eldest son, Duryodhana, secretly aspired to be king. Duryodhana’s fierce ambition made him use all strategies to prevent Yudhishtir’s coronation and wanted to wage war against the Pandavas. Dhritarashtra asked Vidura for his views. Vidura pointed out that Yudhishtir was the rightful heir to the throne. By holding firm to the principles of justice and fair play, he establishes himself as an epitome of virtue and religious dedication.

This angered Duryodhana to such an extent that he called Vidura an ungrateful traitor who should be banished from the palace without any articles for his sustenance. Vidura left voluntarily and went on pilgrimage. On his journey he met Uddhava and Maitreya Muni. Maitreya recited *Srimad Bhagavatam* for Vidura’s benefit. In this way Vidura had become acquainted with all spiritual knowledge starting from the creation to the time of Sri Krishna’s appearance. It can thus be concluded that Vidura is a role model for devotees who aspire to elevate themselves spiritually.

Yours  
Thulsee Rampershad

## Kartik

### Festival Focus

By Nashvin Gangaram

With the auspicious month of Kartik approaching, it is important to try to benefit as much as possible from the various festivals. In “The Nectar of Devotion” by Srila Prabhupada, one of the sixty-four practices of devotional service mentioned is to make arrangements for special services in the month of Kartik (October-November). Krishna is specifically worshiped in His Damodar form, referring to His childhood when He was tied up with a rope by His mother, Yashoda, because He broke a pot of yogurt. Actually, He was not bound with a rope, but by His mother’s pure love for Him.

The *Damodarastakam* prayer, which recounts these incidents, is recited daily to attract Lord Damodar. Many other festivals also occur during the month of Kartik, including the appearance of Radha Kund, Govardhana Puja and Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance anniversary. In Srila Prabhupada’s “The Nectar of Instruction”, Radha Kund is described as the supreme holy place, because it belongs to Srimati Radharani. Of all the devotees, the *gopis* are the most exalted, and of them, Srimati Radharani is the highest.

Even Krishna cannot understand Her transcendental feelings, so He took Her position and appeared as Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Her lake is as dear to Krishna as Radharani Herself. It is even stated that a devotee will at once develop pure love of Krishna if he takes a bath once in Radha Kund. Govardhan Puja commemorates Krishna advising the worship of Govardhan Hill. When Krishna was present on this planet, He wanted to establish devotional service to Him. If one is a devotee of Krishna, it is understood that he has already fulfilled all Vedic injunctions of ritualistic ceremonies and demigod worship. Krishna noticed that the inhabitants of Vrindavan were preparing a sacrifice for the demigod Indra, who supplies rain.

Krishna discouraged this sacrifice because results obtained from demigod worship are only temporary, and still require the permission of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Krishna wanted to eradicate the pride that Indra had developed, and encouraged the worship of Govardhan Hill instead. Krishna then assumed a gigantic form to accept the offerings and declared that Govardhan Hill is identical to Himself. The *gopis* also consider Govardhan Hill to be the best devotee, because it supplies Krishna and Balaram, along with Their cows and cowherd friends with all kinds of necessities: water for drinking, soft grass, caves, fruit, flowers and vegetables.

Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance anniversary is arguably the most significant festival, because without him, most of the people around the world would not even be aware of any other festivals. We should try to understand Srila Prabhupada’s disappearance in the same manner that he understood the disappearance of his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur.

Although his spiritual master passed away almost thirty years before Srila Prabhupada journeyed to America, he always felt his presence. There are two ways to associate: *vani* (words or instructions) and *vapuh* (physical presence). Physical presence is not always available, but *vani* exists eternally. Srila Prabhupada took full advantage of this by considering the instructions of his spiritual master as his life and soul. Although there is a feeling of separation, spiritually, there is no difference between appearance and disappearance. The devotee is a servant of the Lord during life, and continues in devotional service even after death.

In addition to the joy that these festivals bring, they also give us a glimpse of the spiritual world, and the eternal ever-increasing bliss that awaits us when we become pure devotees of the Lord. Let us take full advantage of this sublime process for awakening our dormant Krishna consciousness.

# Kartik 2014

## 18 October - 17 November

You are warmly invited to offer a lamp  
every evening at the temple at 7pm





# Hare Krishnas Sparkle in Sandton

By Anandini Padayachee

The Vaishnava Institute of Education and Training (VIEC) is dedicated to propagating the principles enunciated by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in the *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The primary function of the VIEC is to create an all-inclusive, holistic environment of performing arts and educational training in Vedic theology and its application in a modern day setting.

Incorporating this concept along with the idea of His Holiness Devamrita Swami, who in 2007 envisioned “the spiritualization of Johannesburg,” ISKCON Sandton was born.

The need to preach Krishna consciousness to a multiracial, multicultural diaspora being principle priority, ploughed the way in search of the ‘perfect location’ that would aid ISKCON Johannesburg to realize Maharaja’s words. Situated in the heart of Sandton, no. 11, 11th Street, Rivonia, ISKCON Sandton has begun actualizing this vision.

The activities and events that we host are:

**Youth Development** – Is headed by the energetic and vivacious Krishna Balam Youth Group (KBYG). They meet weekly and tackle relevant issues confronting youth, using dexterous and vibrant means imbibed with scriptural injunction.

**University Preaching** – The centre will be the national headquarters of the Bhakti Yoga Society (BYS). Part of the BYS experience will include retreats at the centre providing students with a portal into an authentic ancient spiritual experience.

**Education and Training** – The VIEC has a fantastic line-up of seminars and workshops that cater to the beginner in spiritual life as well as a seasoned practitioner of Vedanta sutra. Many of the workshops will run at the centre itself and will have a deeper focus of developing one’s spiritual path whilst others will target corporate institutions and similarly orientated organizations with techniques to combat stress and public-private balance, etc.

**Kids’ Development** – Vedic literature emphasizes the importance of spiritual development beginning from as early as possible thereby inculcating morality, respect and discretion in individuals. The VIEC aims

to fulfil this injunction by hosting an array of kiddies activities making children well-versed in scripture, arts and culture and overall spiritualism.

**Yoga** – Through the offering of biweekly yoga classes, the centre seeks to help attendees achieve perfection of the body, mind and soul.

**Arts & Culture** – Arts and Culture is a platform, in all societies, that encourage self-expression through art. Professional teachers will guide students through instrument playing, singing lessons and dance classes.

## Food for

**Life** – One of the important and relevant functions of the VIEC is to establish a Food for Life kitchen which aims to distribute 2000 free plates of pure vegetarian meals, a week, to the underprivileged schools, organizations and homes in and around Johannesburg.

**Karma-free Cooking** – The centre is excited to have a take-away restaurant offering delicious and expertly prepared snacks, main meals and desserts 7 days a week. An additional and exciting feature of the restaurant will be weekly cooking lessons.

The property has four independent buildings as well as a swimming pool. The utilization of the each of the buildings has been carefully thought of and will serve in the following ways: Reception and restaurant, Temple room, offices for ISKCON Sandton, KBYG and BYS, Food for Life kitchen, arts and culture room and living quarters for resident and visiting devotees.

The VIEC is in the process of actualizing the above mentioned activities. With a strong congregation and experienced management, the institution aims to expand and strengthen the already-running activities. In addition, two of the centre’s chief aims are to purchase surrounding properties as it would allow for the building of an opulent temple as well as develop a Food for Life kitchen. Lastly, the centre aims to fulfil the words of Devamrita Swami, “With its bold vision and mature, experienced management, it firmly reestablishes ISKCON’s central presence in the African continents foremost city.”

You can contact ISKCON Sandton: 011 234 1111, sandton@ISKCONza.com or Facebook: ISKCON Sandton



## Anger Management Workshop

### Report

By Divesh Maharaj

Anger is a natural emotion that every human being experiences. When we react to frustration, criticism or a threat, we may become angry. When anger becomes full-blown rage our judgment and thinking becomes impaired and we are more likely to do and say unreasonable and irrational things. Anger triggers an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and levels of adrenaline. It is described in the Vedic literature that anger may sometimes be spiritually appropriate if it is provoked by injustices against the Supreme Lord or His devotees. A good example is Hanuman who displayed anger at Ravana for abducting Sita.

Partha Pratim Das of India presented an anger management workshop at the Radha Radhanath Temple. Approximately five hundred people attended. Partha quoted relevant verses from scripture: "A person who desires liberation from this material world should not fall under the control of anger because when bewildered by anger one becomes a source of dread for all others." *Srimad Bhagavatam*, 4.11.32.



He explained that in the age of Kali, people are agitated by the slightest misunderstanding and that unmanaged anger can be dangerous. He screened an amusing video clip on road rage to demonstrate this point.

He asked everyone to chant the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*, as a potent way to overcome anger. He stressed that sincere meditation on the sound vibration of the mantra has a calming effect on the mind and will purify one's consciousness and will have the effect of eliminating unwanted emotions. He demonstrated this by playing an audio recording of Srila Prabhupada chanting and asked everyone to concentrate on the sound. After ten minutes many attendees indicated that they felt calm and relaxed. He also stressed the importance of following a vegetarian diet which can help in controlling anger. Vegetarian foods in the mode of goodness that are offered to Lord Krishna and consumed as *prasada*

have a deep purifying effect on the consciousness. Partha Prathim concluded by highlighting again the potency of chanting to purify the consciousness.

*Keep an eye out in the local newspaper for more such seminars hosted at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple.*

## Celebrating Women

### Report

An interview with Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple hosted a spectacular Women's Day Tea Party. Krishangi Radhe organised this event. When asked why it is important to celebrate women she remarked, "The many roles we [women] play on a daily basis and the many challenges that we face and ways we raise above those challenges within those roles are ample reasons to celebrate womanhood."

The tea-party was billed as "Empowering women through spiritual practice." It was an elegant affair



with graceful black and gold drapes over the ceiling. The event was an opportunity to engage with women of all walks of life in matters that are meaningful to them and encourage women of the 21st century to look to the Vedas for guidance in daily affairs. It is to also encourage devotee association and friendship building through such initiatives. The special guest was Claire Newton, a counselling psychologist, trainer, speaker and coach, who presented "Body language for confidence." Nirvana Kasopersadh said, "I found Claire's presentation useful in dealing with people. She encouraged open communication that can be also be used in our spiritual practice." The ladies were first served sweet and savoury treats, coffee, and tea and breyani and dhal for lunch.

Spiritual discussion was presented in a relaxed environment. The event was loads of fun, with games and prizes, a *samskaras* fashion show and most importantly a forum to gain spiritual strength and build friendships.

The event was indeed a success with over 400 women attending. Krishangi received positive feedback and many women said they are looking forward to the next Women's Day celebration at the temple. She is already thinking of new and exciting concepts to include next year.



## Freedom Behind Bars

### Report

By Saras Naidoo

A call for help reaches the temple via a letter. It was in the 1990's and Akinchana Dasi responds offering solace to the prisoner. Letters from others followed and she uplifted their spirit. A more personal approach was needed and Jaisacinandana Das fostered interaction with the prison authorities and paved the way for the "Prison Programme." Subsequently the *Bhagavad-gita* courses that he and Nama Chintamani Dasi held at the Westville Prison proved to be a historic breakthrough.

Today, Anasuya Dasi and her brother Anand Maharajh hold weekly prayer meetings, and even celebrate auspicious days like Janmashtami and Diwali. Some challenges they face are accessibility and protocol. This does not deter them as they forge ahead taking on issues like the availability of vegetarian foods and the occasional use of traditional attire.

On the 30th August I accompanied Anasuya to the Janmashtami programme. The *mirdanga*, flowers, sanctified food parcels, and a small deity of Baby Krishna had to be declared and approved before we were allowed into a room where the six ladies waited. She bear-hugged each one and set up a little altar on a corner table while they updated her as one would a trusted friend. They each sang a *bhajan* and we joined in. Our voices bonded in the common purpose of glorifying Krishna and it travelled through the silent corridors. Thereafter each lady had a chance to offer a rose and a letter of gratitude. Mala's read: "Thank you Srila Prabhupada for changing my life. I am sentenced for 18 years in prison. By praying to you and Sri Krishna, my darkness is slowly turning to light. When I first came to prison I thought it was the end of the world for me. By chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* I had so much peace, not even realizing that four years have already passed. I thank you for sending your dear servant Anasuya Mathaji to my aid. She is a good teacher and a mother to me. Without her I would not have made it." As we leave the heavy institution Anasuya reminded me that as spirit souls we are also imprisoned within the four walls-birth, disease, old age and death.

On the same day Anand with a team of devotees, arranged a larger programme at the hall in the male section of the prison. A painting, a stunning replica of the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple altar, done by an inmate on a three meter cloth was impressive. Over 300 prisoners attended. With the *kirtan*, prayers and a talk by Ganganarayana Das, the prison had all the elements and benefits of a holy place.

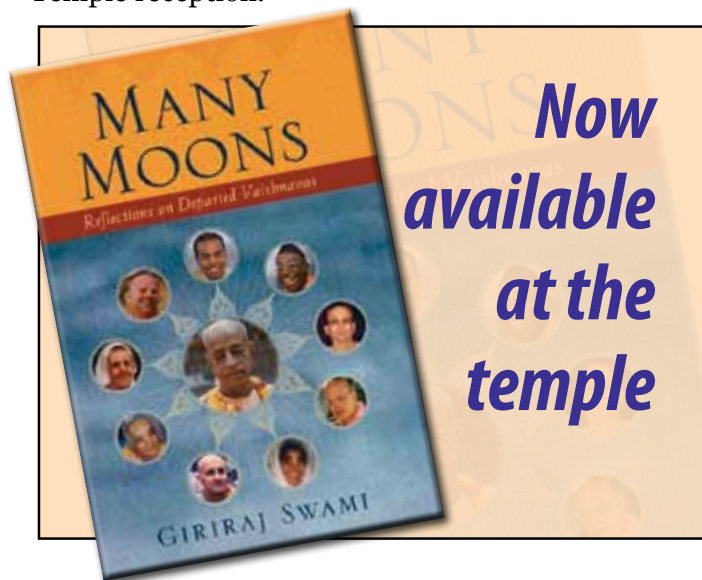


The 37 inmates that attend the weekly programme have Krishna pictures and chanting beads. Most of them chant a fixed number, some as many as sixteen rounds while a few chant constantly. They have also received certificates after completing correspondence courses offered by the Bhaktivedanta College of Education and Culture. A collection of Srila Prabhupada's books, CDs

and DVDs are available to inmates at the prison library.

Ideals of freedom are collectively accepted, fought for and then protected, but freedom is also relative to circumstance - for a skydiver it's an open parachute and for a shopper its unlimited credit. The knowledge in *Bhagavad-gita* and the practice of devotion has the power to give one ultimate freedom beyond circumstance. Anand has seen the transformation this knowledge brings and envisions this formula of compassion, endeavour and team effort taken to various prisons across South Africa.

This herculean task requires a combined effort. Anyone interested in becoming involved in the upcoming Diwali programme can contact Anand by leaving a message at the Sri Sri Radha Radhanath Temple reception.



## Radha Kund

### From A Spiritual Dimension

#### Once Upon a Time

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

In his book “Vedic Cosmography and Astronomy,” Richard L. Thompson describes some of the intricacies of the universe and explains that with our limited three-dimensional vision we can only understand the universe relative to these limitations. However, higher dimensional perception, which includes observation of higher planetary systems and beings, require superior vision that is not available to ordinary human beings. There are rare human beings who have acquired higher dimensional perception through yogic practice or other spiritual means. Their elevated consciousness has allowed them to enter realms on Earth and beyond that are invisible to material vision. Yet, there are spiritual realms that are not possible for the ordinary yogi or transcendentalist to perceive.

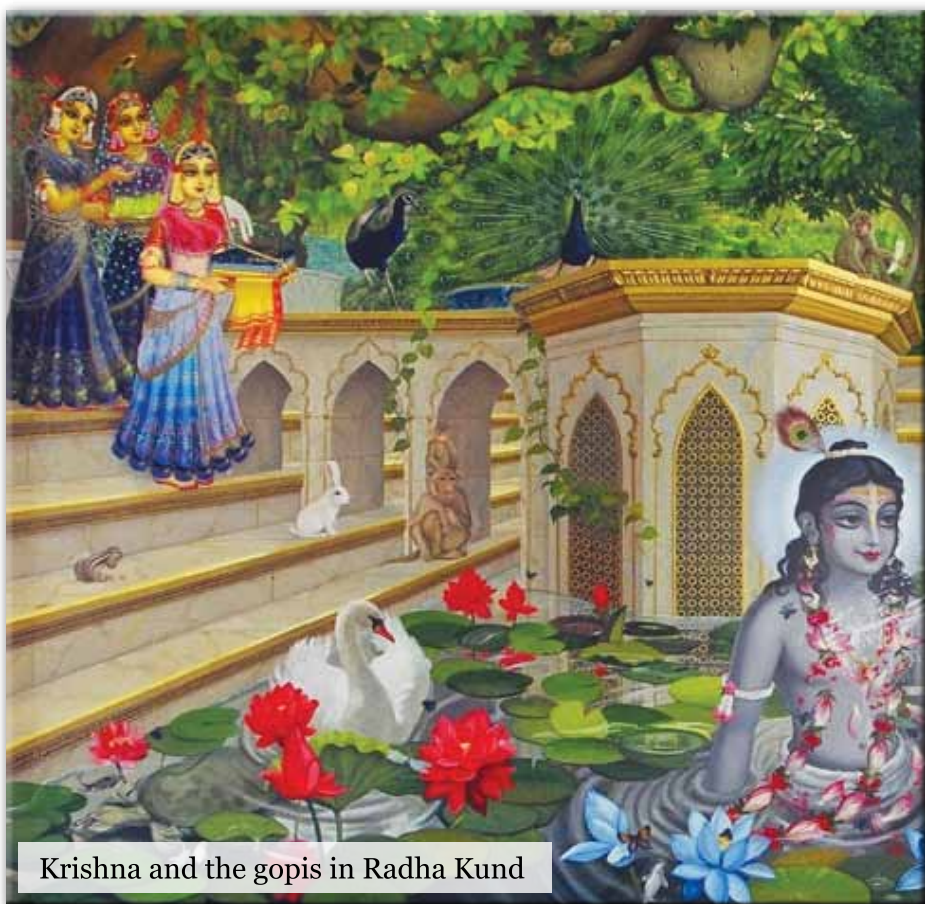
Vrindavan, the birthplace of Lord Krishna, is one such realm. Although it is a geographical location visible to our mundane eyes, the eternal Vrindavan can only be observed and experienced by those whose eyes are anointed with love for God. Some of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s followers, who possessed this supreme love, revealed several of Krishna’s pastime places in Vrindavan. In 1514 during the holy month of Kartik, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, who is a merciful combined incarnation of Radha and Krishna, discovered two unique ponds, which had been lost for centuries. Immersed in the loving mood of Radharani, He looked for Krishna everywhere as He wandered on the pathways of Govardhan Hill. When He came to the town of Aristagram, He asked its residents, “Where is Radha Kund and Shyam Kund?” Then He saw something that caught His breath and made Him run towards it. Passersby could not understand why two puddles of muddy water in the middle of a paddy field could excite Him so much. They were even more surprised when He covered His body with the mud and declared that those were the sacred *kunds*. Only His followers and those endowed with a similar vision could understand why these ponds were so close to His heart.

Raghunath Das Goswami, one of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu’s devout followers, excavated the *kunds* and had them enlarged because he knew that many pilgrims would eventually come there to bathe in the holy waters. During the excavation, Yudhisthira Maharaja (one of the five Pandava brothers)

appeared to Raghunath in a dream and told him not to cut down the trees around Shyam Kund because he and his four brothers were residing as trees on its banks performing worship. What were they seeing and why were they worshipping these *kunds*, which could be perceived only by those with divine vision? Why did the name Aristagram remind Lord Chaitanya of Radha Kund and Shyam Kund?

More than 4000 years before, Krishna had just killed a ferocious bull demon named Arista, who had caused disruption in Vrindavan. Feeling pleased about His heroic deed, Krishna met Srimati Radharani and the *gopis* for the *rasa* dance. But to His surprise and disappointment, they bluntly refused to be with Him. Radha explained that because He had killed a bull, He had sinned and had to be purified before associating with them. Krishna eagerly enquired about the means of becoming cleansed. When Radha told Him that He would have to take bath in all the sacred waters of the universe, He replied in disbelief, “O Radhe! That will take a long time, which means being away from you. Even one moment away from you causes me such distress.” Then His face lit up with an idea. “I know what to do. I will call all the sacred waters of the universe to come here instead.”

The *gopis* sneered, “Kanha, don’t trick us with your words. We are not going to be fooled by your magic.” Ignoring their remarks, Krishna struck the ground with His right foot causing a depression on the earth. Placing His flute to His lips, He generated a sound that sent ripples of delight through the *gopis’* bodies



Krishna and the gopis in Radha Kund



and minds. The melody He played sparkled as if sound turned to gold, and immediately all the sacred rivers personified appeared before Him, bowing their heads in reverence.

The holy rivers introduced themselves one by one: Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Narmada, Kaveri, Godavari... Then as Krishna individually summoned them, they poured their water in the hole in the ground, forming a dazzling pond. Krishna jumped in the cool waters and took His bath. Eager to be with the *gopis* again and gain their favour, He invited them to enter His *kund*. But the clever *gopis* refused and answered, “How can we enter your *kund*? Now its waters are contaminated with your sin.” Krishna explained to them that it wasn’t a bull that He had killed but a demon disguised as a bull. But Radharani defeated His argument by saying that once Indra was punished for killing Vritrasura, who was a demon in the guise of a brahman, and so Krishna’s action could not be excused.

The *gopis* decided to make their own *kund*. They went to the place where Aristasura had dug his hoof into the ground. They broke their golden bangles and used them to dig in the middle of that hole. After they had finished, Krishna scornfully remarked, “This is a lovely *kund*, but it doesn’t have any water. Why don’t you take some water from my *kund*?” The *gopis* stubbornly refused. They were determined to complete the task without Krishna’s help. Radharani sent countless *gopis* to Manasi Ganga nearby to

collect water to fill her *kund*, but their efforts were in vain. Because Krishna cannot bear to see even a bead of perspiration on Radharani’s forehead, He signalled the rivers personified to appear again. They bowed before Srimati Radhika and prayed, “We thought that the perfection of our lives was to be associated with Krishna. But now we see that Krishna is worshiping and serving you and is most blissful when He can satisfy you. We realize that to be associated with you is the perfection of life. Please allow us to enter your *kund*.” By now Radha’s heart had melted by the sweet words of the rivers. She also knew that there was no question of Krishna ever being contaminated. Her behaviour was simply meant to increase Krishna’s

***There are rare human beings who have acquired higher dimensional perception through yogic practice or other spiritual means.***

pleasure.

Immediately the holy waters from Shyam Kund broke through its wall and entered Radha’s *kund*. Krishna exclaimed, “Your *kund* is exceedingly more beautiful than my *kund*. It will be my favourite *kund* and because it is non-different from you and is filled with your love for me, its glories will exceed mine.”

When Lord Chaitanya rediscovered the *kunds*, he prayed, “Just as Srimati Radharani is most dear to Lord Krishna, so Her lake, known as Radha Kund, is also very dear to Him. Of all the *gopis*, Srimati Radharani is certainly the most beloved.... It was in that lake that the all-opulent Lord Sri Krishna performed His pastimes with Srimati Radharani with great pleasure and transcendental bliss. Whoever bathes just once in Radha Kund attains Srimati Radharani’s loving attraction for Sri Krishna...” (Cc. *Madhya* 18.8 and 18.12)

Every year on the auspicious anniversary of Radha Kund’s appearance, exactly at midnight on Bahulastami, the dark *astami* of Kartik, hundreds of thousands of pilgrims and devotees flood Radha Kund’s banks to bathe in its sacred waters seeking this benediction. Even though they may not be qualified to perceive Radha Kund and its banks laden with billions of conscious, blissful wish-fulfilling stones, its exquisite gardens and groves, or its desire trees and creepers made of coral and rubies, they can appreciate and experience the special sanctity of this place, and see through the eyes of those possessing sublime eyesight.



## Addiction

### Youth Column

By Rukmini Devi Dasi

In between the pastas and sauces along the Shoprite aisles, I bumped into a friend. A shock wave pulsed through me. Randy? The eyes that once sparkled with zest for life were dark and sunken. The warm smile had withered into a nervous twitch. He was just a carcass with a taught covering of skin. Was this the friendly, good-hearted guy from my high school class? "Drugs," my companion muttered under her breath. I didn't want to believe her, but true it was.

### *Nobody plans to become a victim of addiction.*

A month later I found myself in the Nelson Mandela Youth Centre. A police official was extolling the statistics of drug abuse with an air of victory. Hundreds of straws of cocaine and heroin and kilograms of marijuana had been confiscated. Millions of rands of drug money had been recovered and major drug lords were arrested. I sat with horror in the pit of my stomach. I'm a Chatsworth girl, born and raised. These dealers were likely the next door neighbour's next door neighbour. Chatsworth and Phoenix have been listed as having the highest occurrence sugars addictions; the majority being our youth.

Reality then decided to get personal. A close family member lost his job and was on the brink of losing his wife and 5 year old daughter because of his addiction to a prescription drug administered to him after a minor car accident. "I started with two tablets a day and let it get to thirty. That's 900 tablets per month and it's a level five drug. It's equivalent to the morphine level that resulted in Michael Jackson's death." Facing huge debt and battling with addiction, life was caving in on him – and fast. "Addiction is the hardest thing I had ever had to deal with. It creates a lethal dependence. Your need just keeps increasing. It brings you face to face with suicide. I've been that close..."

He was one of the lucky few who called out for help, knowing that he was in too deep to save himself. Surrounded with a lot of love he slowly weaned himself off the drug. The real challenge was to stay drug-free, for that he needed inner strength. "There was only one thing that changed my mind-set," he said, "chanting.

It gave me freedom. My anxiety evaporated. My mind found peace. Krishna's names saved me. The happiness it brought me was higher than any drug could."

Nobody plans to become a victim of addiction. It's not the common answer when asked what you want to do with your life. It may begin with an innocent attempt to escape the pressures of life just a little experiment with the 'in' thing. Yet everyone faces these circumstances to some degree; especially in the prime of youth, when adrenaline is pumping and hormonal fluxes raging. How does one channel that energy in a way that is both safe and satisfying?

Last week a hundred people in their twenties gathered in ISKCON Sandton for twelve hours of non-stop party. Thunderous drum beats, rhythmic dancing and bobbing dreadlocks. It was an explosion of sheer energy. In that time all they did was chant the names of God. For a moment I just observed the beaming faces. They sure looked high, but no drugs were needed. Each moment was encapsulated by the power and joy of mantra all the cares of the world were at bay. These *kirtan* events are gaining significant momentum with youth all over the world.

George Harrison, of the famous Beatles, described mantra as, "Mystical energy encased in a sound structure." He first heard the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* whilst aboard a ship and chanted it the entire journey. "Because you couldn't stop once you got going. As soon as you stopped the lights went out." Hmm, sounds like addiction, doesn't it? The difference is that to have a "lethal dependence" on the holy names of God such that your "need" to connect to Him "just keeps increasing" will bring you "face to face" with Him. It brings you that close...



ISKCON Sandton's twelve hour non-stop party



## Gadgets and Ghosts...

### Vedic Observer

By Venu Gopal Das

Moving to another country brings forth wonderful aspirations, dreams and hopes. However, it is also accompanied by expectations the mind creates... shortly upon arrival you get to realize if those expectations were worth the bother. For me, most were true. In Japan, people are short, Tokyo is ridiculously expensive and, of course, shockingly safe. Only one of my expectations was horribly confounded, the idea that Japanese people are irreligious.

People who have visited Japan before advised me against explaining my strict vegetarian diet and religious beliefs. They said the Japanese will never accept it. With this in mind it made sense that a country that strives in academic, scientific and technological progress would not take to spirituality.



Whilst sight-seeing, I happened to notice numerous structures that didn't look like they belong in 21st century Japan. I enquired what they were and my colleague replied, "Those are Shinto temples." Surprised, I asked if people go there often. He said, "Yes, everybody goes all the time, especially now, all our ancestors are here!"

Utterly confused, I decided to do some research. In Japan there are two major religions: Buddhism and Shinto. People also don't have a problem being devoted to both concurrently. These practices however, don't focus on a supreme monotheistic 'God' as we in the west are familiar with. So naturally if a westerner asks a Japanese person if they believe in God, they would simply answer 'No'.

In the *Bhagavad-gita* 9.25, Krishna states: "Those who worship the demigods will take birth among the demigods; those who worship the ancestors go to the ancestors; those who worship ghosts and spirits will take birth among such beings; and those who worship Me will live with Me."

From this text we learn that whatever a person's faith is fixed upon is surely where they will go to after death. Krishna also states (BG. 17.3) that "Due to the influence of material nature, a person develops a particular kind of faith." So although having faith is inherent to all, the degree to which your faith is influenced materially, determines how you select your path of worship, for this reason so many diverse

religious faiths exist. Srila Prabhupada goes on to explain that by worshiping Krishna, one's faith quickly becomes purified from material influence because the identity of a living being is, an eternal soul which is part and parcel of the Supreme Lord (BG. 15.7).

The Japanese are highly influenced by material well being, so much so, that they set numerous standards for the entire world. They consider their success a result of hard work and determination. So naturally, reverence is paid to their predecessors, as opposed to the western "Thank the Lord" ideologies. The Shinto practice involves worshiping the spirits of your late ancestors. In a country where there are gadgets for everything imaginable it is hard to accept that 70% of Japanese people firmly believe in ghostly spirits and 50% i.e. 62 million people even claim to have seen them.

This phenomenon verifies the text above, wherever your faith is fixed, is surely the direction you will go. The fact that

they so easily subscribe to both Buddhism and Shinto simultaneously, implies that their faith is influenced in a specific manner that leaves no room for a supreme monotheistic 'God'. The Japanese may not recognize Allah, Christ or Krishna, but they have faith. We should all recognize the primary fact that having the ability to inherently possess 'faith', implies that we are all part of something greater. Due to the influence of materialism our faith wavers, but with the right impetus it can always be cleansed, regardless of beliefs, circumstance or religion...

*Venu Gopal Das and his wife, Leanne, recently moved to Okinawa, Japan. They will be spending two years there teaching English.*

**His Holiness**  
**Partha Sarathi Das Goswami**  
**Sri Vyasa Puja**  
**Saturday**  
**12 October**  
**6pm**

## Food For Thought

### God Conscious Parenting

By Krishangi Radhe Dasi

Children are developing chronic illnesses from a young age. A casual look around reveals that grommets, allergies, attention deficit disorder, and a myriad of other problems are rife. These things should not affect children – childhood is a time for being carefree, healthy and happy.

South Africa is following closely to the United States with nearly 20% of children between the ages of 6-19 being overweight or obese. This rampant epidemic is a growing concern that could have a long lasting negative impact. The Daily News headline “War on junk food ads – strategy to gut lifestyle disease” shows the high risks associated with consuming unhealthy food (3 September 2013). The National Department of Health is considering a ban on all junk food advertising during children’s TV programmes. Taking a step further, they propose higher taxes on processed, unhealthy food and, at the same time, tax exemption on healthier choices. This shows the magnitude of the problem in South Africa. We do not only have the opportunity but also a responsibility to be a part of the solution to this problem.



Srila Prabhupada explains that we should offer our food to God before we can partake thereof. The purpose of this offering is to create a loving transaction and to learn how to serve God. The spiritual benefit is that once the food is offered it becomes *prasada* (sanctified food, which is the Lord’s mercy) and helps us achieve good consciousness. A child who offers food to Krishna with love and devotion will certainly attract the Lord’s attention. This loving offering can easily become a family practice by preparing the meals

together and making an offering to Lord Krishna by simply chanting the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra*. Even a toddler can enjoy this service and relationship with the Lord. Explain to children that the Temple kitchen belongs to Radharani and we can also invite Radharani to the kitchen at home by maintaining a clean and neat standard.

**...the carbon foot-print of a vegetarian diet is about half that of a meat-lovers diet.**

Interestingly, the dietary requirements that are prescribed by today’s nutritionists are nothing new, but have been long standing in the Vedas.

Research shows that a balanced vegetarian diet is the most suitable. In a purport in *Srimad Bhagvatam* (1.8.40), Srila Prabhupada encourages the enjoyment of natural gifts such as grains and vegetables, fruits, rivers, the hills of jewels as supplied by the Supreme. In the *Vedanta Sutra*, Srila Vyasadeva reveals that one of the four pillars of religion namely compassion is destroyed by slaughtering of animals and meat eating.

Research further proves that those who consume meat are at a higher risk of health problems. This is due to the chemicals, tranquilizers, preservatives and other drugs that are often added to meat.

Another interesting fact is that the carbon foot-print of a vegetarian diet is about half that of a meat-lovers diet. Going vegetarian will cut your carbon footprint and help save the world and will not compromise your health. On the nutritional side, vegetables, legumes, dairy products, fruits and grains provide the perfect balance for an active child. The question may then arise: where is the source of protein in my child’s diet? Interestingly, a child requires less than 45 grams of protein daily. In order to obtain this requirement as well as to ensure that the full quota of vitamins and minerals that are

obtained, you do not have to offer your child meat; these can be fulfilled through a 100 % vegetarian diet of a variety of grains, lentils, nuts, vegetables, dairy products, tofu and fruits and other innovative dishes

Cooking, offering and relishing *prasada* is a part of devotional service. Let us be the force of change as we combat dreaded disease and childhood illness. Turn your kitchen into a burst of natural goodness, providing the best nutrition...for the body and soul.



## The Greatest Mother

By Yamuna Devi Dasi

On my first trip to India the vivid experience from the airport to the hotel was a cultural shock. I remember we suddenly stopped in the middle of a busy road, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of taxis, *rikshas* and people, and waited for a cow to cross the street. This was a scene out of the ordinary as my memories of cows were at a farm in South Africa and certainly not in the busy streets of Durban.

Realizing at that moment the importance of cows both in India and in Vedic culture I recalled Lord Krishna's words in *Bhagavad-gita* 10.28: "*Dhenunam asmi kamadhuk...* Amongst the cows, I am the wish fulfilling cow."

Generally we envision Lord Krishna surrounded by beautiful white cows rendering selfless service to Him in His glorious pastimes. We can clearly see that she is most dear to the Lord and is the embodiment of all auspiciousness. In the Vedas it is further stated that within her body reside the 33 million demigods

and worshipping her pleases the entire creation. She fulfils and nourishes our devotion and is the pillar of dharma or religion.

Materially she selflessly provides the richness of her milk. Her urine and dung are also used for medicinal and spiritual practices. The Vedas reject the killing of the holy cow and reiterate her protection so that her resources are utilized in the proper way. Srila Prabhupada condemned slaughter houses and opened many large farm communities to sustain natural living and shelter of cows.



Cows on Govardhan Hill

In his mood, just as we revere and honour a mother's love, similarly it is only humane that we protect the cow as the greatest mother, giver and maintainer of both our material and spiritual needs. By worshipping and celebrating her we will receive both her blessings and the blessings of Lord Sri Krishna.

*Go-puja will be celebrated on Monday, 4 October, which is also Govardhan Puja. You are invited to come to the temple and offer your prayers and worship to our mother, the cow.*

## Relief From Miseries

### The Holy Name

By Nikunja Vilasini Dasi

Nowadays not many of us are interested in spiritual topics or practices simply because they may not give us the enjoyment we seek. We often find it a tedious and a challenging task to chant God's names or serve Him. We would rather spend our time in things that lure us towards temporary happiness. After all, the soul is by nature pleasure seeking so it is natural that we have a tendency to shun pain and welcome pleasure.

Sometimes, despite our endeavours to enjoy material pleasures, things may not go our way and we see the harsh realities of life. We may then turn to God to remove our sorrows, recognizing our insignificance in controlling circumstances and situations. Lord Krishna, in the *Bhagavad-gita*, describes this class of persons as pious and having auspicious merit. But, is it possible to approach God with a different understanding?

In our last issue we discussed our inborn nature to serve and how when service is directed to the Lord we become supremely satisfied and happy. We also emphasized how chanting the *maha-mantra*, which is a prayer for the Lord's service, rekindles love and desire for His selfless service. Srila Prabhupada gave the example that sugar candy is given as a remedy to someone who has jaundice, but because of the disease it tastes bitter. Gradually, by taking the medicine, he is cured, and he can once again relish the sweet taste. Similarly, our disease is our forgetfulness of our loving relationship with God, which is revived by the remedy of chanting His holy names. Although initially it may be a difficult or unpleasant process, gradually our dormant love for God awakens and we taste the sweetness of the emotional ecstasies it brings.

Just as a fan, air conditioner or cool breeze may relieve us of the scorching heat, they don't award us real pleasure—they merely give us temporary relief. Similarly, we are seeking temporary relief from suffering by chanting God's holy names, not realizing that the divine name can give us much more than that.

## Spine Curving to Krishna

By Kereen Dhani

I opened my eyes to find I couldn't speak due to an oxygen mask over my mouth and nose. My body felt heavy and I felt helpless. Questions were racing through my mind faster than I could find answers. The next morning I awoke fresh, finding myself lying in the intensive care unit. It was quiet, still, dark and not pleasant. When I heard the beeping of machines all around me, I knew my spine surgery was successful.

In 2010, I was diagnosed with a spine disorder, scoliosis (curving of the spine). By mid-2012 my orthopaedic surgeon asked my family and I to take a tough decision for surgery to be done. It was essential. After weeks of deep discussion the operation was booked for 20 November 2012. The journey began with visits to the cardiologist, the blood bank and the x-ray department. Those days tore me apart knowing that the day of surgery will soon arrive.

My entire body felt broken, misplaced and messed up. The encouraging and divine words of my Gurudev, His Holiness Partha Sarathi Das Goswami, the three beautiful Lordships Jagannath, Baladev and Subhadra Devi, and the loving support of my parents, family and friends kept me going.

The first few days were tough after the surgery. My painful, lonely days began with kind nurses waking me up with their booming voices, lights on, curtains closed around us as they bathed me. Gradually after the third day of surgery a nurse and the physiotherapist helped me off the bed. Stiff as



17 year old Kereen Dhani

ever, pin straight, tensed, I took my first steps. It was the most incredible feeling in the world. In that moment my eyes filled with tears and my heart with gratitude to the Lord for holding my hand thus far. Before I knew it I was up and down stairs, walking in hallways, breathing perfectly and getting on and off the bed easily.

Life was no where near back to normal. A few days later I felt strong enough to conduct a little *arati* to our Deities. As I offered each item I felt re-energized with powerful spiritual mercy and extremely fortunate to be in the inspiring, incredible association of my devotee friends. The support, the never ending love, the visits, the prezzies, and most importantly, the powerful prayers offered by each person helped me endure this painful experience. I couldn't thank the Lord enough and to date I have absolutely no words to thank my Gurudev. From day one I had no doubt that anything would go wrong because he was right there every step of the way.

Seven weeks later, in time for school to re-open, I felt more than ready to face all the challenges that lay ahead. Slowly but surely I continued to heal. By Krishna's mercy I had overcome a six and a half hour spine operation.

I have a story; in fact we all do — all unique. This cleansing process taught me that if we listen to one another carefully with heart, we can transform another person. Life isn't easy, but no-one said it's not impossible without Krishna in the middle. We all have something/someone to fall back on and when we looker deeper we find the key to our spiritual life, to the shelter of the Lord's lotus feet. Remember the Lord gives the hardest battles to the toughest soldiers.

## Capturing Minds in Midrand

By Madri Dasi

Srila Prabhupada wrote in a letter: "I think Krishna is dictating us to adopt this method for propagating the Sankirtana movement all over the different cities, towns and villages on the surface of the globe, because that was the prediction of Lord Chaitanya. The exact words in Bengali poetry are: *prithi vite acche yata nagaradi gram sarvatra pracara haibe more nama.*" (17 July 1968, Montreal)

With this in mind ISKCON Midrand is trying to make a humble contribution towards fulfilling this prophecy. Since its inception in July 2012 the fortnightly gatherings have grown in numbers from fifty-five to a hundred and twenty. The gathering consists of a vibrant lecture, *arati*, *kirtan* and concludes with a sumptuous free feast. This

programme adds a perfect end to one's week.

In the last year we hosted ten hall programmes attracting 300 to 500 individuals at a time. The devotees of ISKCON Midrand perform captivating dramas based on the pastimes of the Lord and thereby enhance the presentation of the philosophy of Krishna consciousness.

Our monthly feeding scheme distributes hot nutritious meals at four orphanages. A group of 68 volunteers find great solace in this noble act. Every Monday night at 7.15 pm sixty individuals attend a *Bhagavad-gita* overview course. On Tuesday evenings another course on *The Science of Self-Realization* is well received at Edenvale. The above activities help develop a congregation for the opening of a new ISKCON centre in Midrand in the near future. For further info call 0835511550.



## How Govardhan Puja Began

### Young Vaishnavas Column

By Thulsee and Anjinee Rampershad

Once Lord Krishna said that since Govardhan Hill provided the people of Vrindavan with all necessities, they should offer a prayer of thanks to Govardhan Hill. The people prepared all kinds of eats like cakes, biscuits, things made from milk products, rice dishes, soups, etc. The offerings were placed around Govardhan Hill and everyone sang and danced around Govardhan.

Usually these offerings were made for Lord Indra because it was felt that he provided the rain which resuscitated the abundant food supply. But when Krishna stopped the people from making the usual offerings, Indra became angry. This led to Indra bringing heavy rains and causing a flood to punish the people. To save the people and animals from the continuous downpour, Lord Krishna lifted Govardhan Hill and rested it on His little finger although He was only seven years old. The people and animals found shelter under the hill. When Indra saw this he realised his mistake and apologised to Lord Krishna.

### Activity

Govardhan puja is on Monday, 4 November, and this activity will make Lord Krishna very happy and bless you.

### You will need:

A variety of stones; grass, small stems, coloured leaves, and flowers; coloured lamps; toy animals; and a wooden board. Help your parents prepare vegetarian sweets and savouries.



### Here's how:

Decorate your Govardhan Hill according to your taste.

- Clean the board and place on a table. (Leave enough space to walk around.)
- Wash and dry stones and arrange to form a low-lying hill.
- Scatter the grass, plants and flowers. Then place the animals around.
- Place a picture of Radha-Krishna at the highest point of your hill.
- Place the lamps around the hill and ask your parent to light the lamps.
- Arrange the food offerings on a plate and offer it to the picture of Radha-Krishna on the hill.
- After the food offering you can do an arati.
- Then the entire family can walk around the hill singing the Hare Krishna maha-mantra.

Please send us pictures of your hill.

## Vaishnava Calendar

14 Oct	Mo	Ramacandra Vijayotsava Sri Madhvacarya - Appearance
15 Oct	Tu	Ekadasi
16 Oct	We	Break fast 05:16 - 09:33 Disappearance of: Srila Raghunatha Das Gosvami Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami Srila Krishnadas Kaviraja Gosvami
18 Oct	Fr	Kartik Begins Sri Krishna Saradiya Rasayatra Laksmi Puja Fourth month of Caturmasya begins (urad dal fast for one month)
24 Oct	Th	Srila Narottama Das Thakura - Disappearance
27 Oct	Su	Appearance of Radha Kunda
30 Oct	We	Ekadasi
31 Oct	Th	Break fast 05:02 - 09:27
3 Nov	Su	Diwali
4 Nov	Mo	Go Puja   Govardhana Puja
7 Nov	Th	Srila Prabhupada - Disappearance (Fast till noon)
10 Nov	Su	Gopastami Sri Srinivasa Acharya - Disappearance
13 Nov	We	Ekadasi Srila Gaura Kisora Dasa Babaji Disappearance (Fast till noon)
14 Nov	Th	Break fast 04:52 - 09:24
17 Nov	Su	Sri Krishna Rasayatra Tulasi-Saligrama Vivaha
18 Nov	Mo	Katyayani vrata begins
29 Nov	Fr	Ekadasi
30 Nov	Sa	Break fast 04:47 - 09:25
12 Dec	Th	Advent of Srimad Bhagavad-gita
13 Dec	Fr	Ekadasi
14 Dec	Sa	Break fast 04:49 - 05:59
17 Dec	Tu	Katyayani vrata ends

## Notice Board

Congratulations to Yamuna Priya and Vibhu Caitanya on the arrival of their son, Uddhava and to Balaram and Pumi on the arrival of their son, Aindra.

To receive SMS or email notifications and updates, subscribe to [temple@iskcondurban.net](mailto:temple@iskcondurban.net)

For general queries call the temple at 031-4033328 between 9.30am-5pm. For programme updates, Daily Darshan, and general information: [www.iskcondurban.net](http://www.iskcondurban.net)

Durban Krishna     

Ombudsman for ISKCON South Africa:

Tribanga Sundar Das

[tribangasundar@gmail.com](mailto:tribangasundar@gmail.com)

SMS 0722715400 | P. O. Box 434, Bruma, 2026

## Diwali Treats

### Vaishnava Kitchen

By Citra Devi Dasi

With Govardhan Puja and Diwali around the corner we share three delicious tried and tested recipes. They are classics and celebrate our tradition. Krishna loves tasty treats, so do not forget to offer your preps to Him first, and then share with family and friends. In this way they will also benefit spiritually.

#### Halwa

750 ml water  
250 ml corn flour  
500 ml sugar  
125 ml ghee  
5 ml nutmeg  
5 ml *elachie* seed  
62 ml almonds and pistachio nuts  
5 ml rose water  
12.5 ml lemon juice  
1 or 2 saffron strands

#### Method

Mix water, corn flour, lemon juice and sugar. Boil at high temperature. As the mixture starts to bubble and thicken, lower the heat and cook for a further 15 minutes. Add the ghee slowly, one tablespoon at a time. Then stir in nuts, *elachie*, nutmeg, rose water and saffron. Continue to stir for a further 15 minutes. Set in a glass dish and sprinkle with more nuts.



#### Vara

1 cup semolina  
2 cups fine mealie meal  
3/4 cup chickpea flour  
2 Tblsp oil  
1 tsp baking powder  
500 ml maas  
2 tsp fresh ginger  
1 tsp sesame seeds  
1/2 tsp chopped chillies  
2 tsp Eno  
2tsp lemon juice  
Fresh *dhania*

#### Method

Combine all ingredients except baking powder and leave overnight. Then add green chillies, *dhania*, ginger and sesame seeds. Mix in baking powder. Divide the mixture into half. To each portion add 1 tsp Eno and 1 tsp lemon juice. Make into round balls and deep fry immediately.

#### Burfi

1 kg Klim powder  
1 cup Nestle cream  
1 cup solid ghee  
1/2 cup almonds  
2 tsp *elachie*  
Mix dry ingredients until it resembles bread crumbs.

#### Syrup

3 1/2 cups sugar  
1/2 cup milk  
2 tsp rose essence  
1/2 tsp saffron  
3 cups water

#### Method

Bring all syrup ingredients to a boil until sugar is dissolved. Add dry ingredients and cook on the slowest heat for one hour. Stir occasionally. Place foil at the bottom of a casserole and pour in mixture. Decorate with coloured almonds and more *elachie* powder.

